



I read somewhere that parks are the poetry that a people write upon the land. Working on park development locally for twenty years, I can report that sometimes it is like writing poetry and sometimes it is like the poetry is writing you.

My wife, Carolyn Chipman Evans, and I founded the Cibolo Nature Center over twenty years ago, but it did not always seem like poetry. This kind of poetry is collaborative and sometimes gets into stormy weather. I remember when the baseball players wanted more ball fields and the only unused part of city property was the native prairie at the nature center. After spirited debate, everyone eventually realized that it did not have to be either/or. Everyone was not going to love nature any more than everyone was going to love baseball. The community wanted baseball fields *AND* a native prairie. So, Boerne City Council decided to buy Northrup Park. The community ended up with a nature center and new parkland and ball fields for the kids. Everybody won, thanks to volunteers who stood up for their passions, and we made great friends in the process. The nature center has now acquired the adjoining Herff Farm, and we are developing community gardens and a farmers market, as well as restoring much of the habitat.

Parks projects are challenging and constantly evolving. Changes in the recreation habits of Americans are generating interest in new kinds of parks. Busy Americans want parks close to home - community parks. The popularity of fitness activities such as walking and biking continues to spur the development of greenways, waterfront trails, and other linear parks.

Parks and open space play an important role in communities' economies. A report by the Trust for Public Land cites examples of how parks can stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods, attract businesses, generate investment,

support tourism, raise taxable property values, and produce other economic benefits. Meanwhile, locals just like having a place to bliss out.

Kendall County has witnessed a great surge of park development. As a result of a seven-year grass roots effort, we now have James Kiehl River Bend Park, Joshua Springs Park and Preserve, and Kreuzberg Canyon Natural Area. I have been involved in this park development and I must say it is gratifying to see so many different kinds of parks popping up.

As you can imagine, all this poetry writing involves hours and meetings and planning and more meetings. It is amazing how much indoor time is required to build outdoor spaces for enjoyment.

Writing poetry is never easy, whether it is poetry upon the land or poetry on paper. Good poetry requires exercise of the inner muse, clear inspiration, dogged follow-through, fearless revision, and friends who encourage you. If this kind of work intrigues you, give us a call and join us in this wild adventure.

We are looking for a few good humans.

[KCPP - info@kendallcountyparks.org](mailto:info@kendallcountyparks.org)

[CNC - nature@cibolo.org](mailto:nature@cibolo.org)

*"I'll ask each and every guest
To tread softly, and act their best
To pick up litter, and leash their dogs,
And hush to hear the hymns of frogs.
I'll plant a dream deep in their heart
Of peaceful places set apart
Where nature lives on green and free
With elbow room for you and me.
And when all the people leave the park
And all the day returns to dark
The moon will wink at us below,
And celebrate the Cibolo!"*
The Greenman